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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001011

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2019

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SUBJECT: TFH01: OAS REPRESENTATIVE BRIEFS G-16

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Summary. Ambassador John Biehl of the Organization of American States (OAS) told the G-16 donors group on October 2 that a delegation of OAS Foreign Ministers will visit Honduras on October 7. Biehl said he is optimistic that progress is being made toward finding a solution to Honduras' political crisis, noting that the solution has to emerge from a Honduran dialogue. According to Biehl, a faction of Zelaya's supporters as well as some members of the Honduran elite are obstructing the process. Canadian Ambassador Neil Reeder, who saw President Zelaya at the Brazilian Embassy on October 1, told the G-16 representatives that President Zelaya is tired and looking for an exit. Ambassador Reeder said access to the Brazilian Embassy has improved, there is electricity, and the sanitary situation is all right End Summary.

Progress on Solution

¶2. (C) OAS Representative in Uruguay John Biehl, who arrived in Honduras on September 27, briefed the G-16 donors group on October 2. Ambassador Biehl told the G-16 that a delegation of ten OAS Foreign Ministers will come to Honduras on October ¶7. He said neither President Jose Manuel "Mel" Zelaya nor de facto regime leader Roberto Micheletti would participate in the talks, at least initially. Biehl said he believes we have started down the path towards finding a solution to Honduras' political crisis. He stated that many solutions to the crisis, which have much in common, are being proposed. He noted that the solution has to emerge from a Honduran dialogue.

¶3. (C) According to Ambassador Biehl, the Honduran crisis is a domestic one rather than an international one and should be kept that way. Biehl urged the international community to condemn armed conflict, to report arms trafficking, and to call for the repeal of the decree enacted by the de facto regime on September 26 which curtailed civil liberties.

¶4. (C) Ambassador Biehl told the G-16 that elections alone are not enough to solve the crisis and that there must be a resumption of the constitutional order. He said that he personally believes that there must be a constituent assembly to determine the future of the democratic order in Honduras, but at a later time. Biehl said that the Constitution's presently unchangeable clauses will have to be modified and the international community needs to recognize the demand for this change.

Obstructions

15. (C) Biehl told the G-16 that a faction of Zelaya's supporters is out of control. He said this faction has refused to be included in the dialogue regarding a resolution to the crisis, presumably because they are pushing for a constituent assembly rather than the restitution of President Zelaya. Biehl also accused some very wealthy Hondurans of opposing a resolution to the crisis and of doing their best to complicate the process.

16. (C) Biehl believes that too many parties are making public declarations and urged all to be circumspect in their dealings with the media. Biehl said that, while he was a friend of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, he had to say that press reports that Arias had called the Honduran Constitution the worst in the world had offended Hondurans who need to be part of the dialogue towards a solution to the crisis.

Situation at the Brazilian Embassy

17. (C) Canadian Ambassador Neil Reeder, who visited the Brazilian Embassy on October 1, told the G-16 representatives that President Zelaya is tired and looking for an exit. The Canadian Ambassador added that President Zelaya denies any guilt and is ready to face his accusers in court. Ambassador Reeder said President Zelaya complained about limitations on communication, about being unfairly blamed for the violence, and about the decree curtailing civil liberties passed by the de facto regime on September 26; he said that the de facto

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regime wants to impose a dictatorship on the country.

18. (C) Ambassador Reeder said access to the Brazilian Embassy has improved. He said the sanitary situation is all right and there is electricity. He said there are about 50 to 60 persons in the Embassy, including Zelaya family members, advisors, farmers, and some Venezuelans, most of whom sleep on mattresses on the floor. He noted that, while there are no fixed telephone lines, there are many cell phones. Ambassador Reeder said all the neighbors on the street on which the Brazilian Embassy is located have vacated their homes.

LLORENS